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SUBJECT: MOFA: PRC PRESSURES UN SECURITY OFFICE TO REFUSE
TAIWAN-ISSUED IDENTIFICATION

Classified By: AIT Acting Director Robert S. Wang,
Reasons 1.4(b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary. At China's urging, the United Nations security office recently formalized a policy of not accepting documents issued by Taiwan for identification purposes, according to Taiwan MOFA International Organizations Division Director General Paul Chang. This is despite comments by Chinese President Hu Jintao that China and Taiwan should look for ways to reduce disputes over Taiwan's access to international organizations. Chang blamed UN Under-Secretary-General Sha Zukang for the change, which is making it difficult for Taiwan civil society representatives to take part in UN activities. Although a number of other entities of disputed sovereignty issue photo IDs, Chang said, the policy appears to single out Taiwan exclusively. End Summary.

¶2. (C) UN security personnel appear to be tightening their enforcement of a policy against accepting any form of identification issued by Taiwan from individuals attending UN events, MOFA DG for International Organizations Paul Chang told AIT pol chief June 5. Chang provided as an example a publication prepared for civil society participants in the June 2008 High-Level Meeting on AIDS, which cautioned that "Security, in line with the UN policy, will not accept any identification from Taiwan."

¶3. (C) Ironically, Chang said, UN enforcement of this policy has tightened over the past year, even as cross-Strait relations have improved and PRC President Hu Jintao issued a call to reduce friction over "international space" issues between the two sides. Sha Zukang, a career PRC diplomat now serving as Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, has been pushing from within the UN system to ensure Taiwan's maximum exclusion, Chang suggested. Sha has a reputation as a hardliner on Taiwan issues, he noted, citing the PRC diplomat's infamous "who cares about (Taiwan)?" reaction to suggestions in 2003 that the SARS epidemic offered a concrete example of why Taiwan should be allowed access to the World Health Organization.

¶4. (C) The impact has fallen hardest on members of Taiwan civic organizations hoping to take part in UN public meetings in New York. MOFA works with delegations to ensure that members understand the policy and, where possible, have acceptable alternative IDs (for example, many people in Taiwan have U.S. drivers licenses). In some cases, though, would-be participants travel to New York only to find themselves turned away at the door of the conference hall. The most notable recent example happened in May, Chang said,

when Legislative Yuan member Kung Wen-chi was refused entry to a UN-sponsored meeting on ethnic minorities.

¶5. (C) The UN policy appears to apply only to Taiwan, Chang emphasized. While other entities not recognized by the UN as sovereign states issue passports and other forms of identification (e.g., Kosovo and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus), Taiwan is singled out by the UN security policy. If this subtle squeeze continues, the ultimate impact will be to negate any positive motion on Taiwan's international space, as well as any goodwill earned by Beijing in that process.

¶6. (C) Chang did not request specific action from the United States beyond confirming, to the extent possible, the specifics of the UN policy. Clearly, he said, the restrictions being enforced contribute nothing to the safety of UN events or to the process of cross-Strait reconciliation. Pol chief agreed to convey the request to the appropriate offices.

¶7. (C) Comment. Given U.S. policy supporting Taiwan's meaningful participation in UN agencies, such as WHO and others, we think it would be appropriate for us to bring this problem to the attention of relevant UN officials as well. We will continue to gather more information of cases where Taiwan's unofficial participation in UN agency activities have been similarly restricted. End comment.
WANG